



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report of the 2004 Mediterranean Seminar

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
December 2, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States welcomes the timely issuance of the report on the 2004 Mediterranean Seminar and wants to add its voice to the congratulations for the notable leadership of Ambassador Lenarčič, knowing that he will, we hope, enjoy the praise without inhaling it. We also want to thank the other participants, the Mediterranean Partners, for their work both in the Mediterranean Contact Group and for the work in Sharm-el-Sheikh to make it such a successful event.

As the report makes clear, a number of important issues were discussed during this Seminar. Many of these, such as the need for Confidence and Security Building Measures and increased dialogue between the participating States and the Partners, have been raised numerous times before. But, I would say that I saw in Sharm-el-Sheikh a couple of weeks ago a new depth to the discussions and that the United States takes that as a very encouraging sign of further progress in relations with the Mediterranean Partners.

Participants displayed a real willingness to make and implement concrete proposals, as evidenced most importantly in this regard with the Palestinian elections, which are scheduled for January 9, 2005. Led by the recommendation of the Algerian ambassador, several of the participants joined in to express their support for OSCE involvement in the Palestinian elections. I want to reconfirm here today that the United States strongly supports this initiative, and believes that the OSCE can make a significant contribution to the transparency of these elections.

It is critical that a legitimate Palestinian leadership emerge which is committed to democracy, to the rule of law, to transparent government, and to an end to violence and terror. This is in all of our interests and the U.S. hopes that OSCE can bring itself together here to assist in the process of a democratic election.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.